



To: School District Personnel  
Date: **\*\*UPDATED August 12, 2011\*\***  
Subject: OBTAINING PAYMENTS FOR STATE-PAID TUITION

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The Office of Public Instruction (OPI) makes tuition and transportation payments for certain students. OPI's School Finance Division makes these payments using the MAEFAIRS system. This document will address student eligibility, allowable tuition and transportation costs, and the steps required by the district to obtain payments.

### **STUDENTS ELIGIBLE FOR STATE-PAID TUITION**

[20-5-321 \(d\) and \(e\), MCA](#) identify circumstances under which OPI will pay tuition and transportation costs. OPI bears these costs for non-resident students if:

- The child is under the protective care of a state agency or has been adjudicated to be a youth in need of intervention or a delinquent youth, as defined in [41-5-103, MCA](#) or
- The child is required to attend school outside of the district of residence as the result of a placement in foster care or a group home licensed by the state.

Note that OPI interprets the second group of students to include students placed in foster care or a group home by their parents.

### **ALLOWABLE TUITION AND TRANSPORTATION COSTS**

OPI pays the district's regular annual tuition rate, not to exceed the statutory limits for students attending a school under these circumstances. As described in [ARM 10.7.106A](#), OPI will also pay these students' over-schedule transportation costs. OPI will prorate both annual amounts based on the number of days each student was enrolled.

Districts receive tuition and transportation payments in the fiscal year following the year of attendance. Districts may accrue the amount generated but not received during a given fiscal year. However, doing so may adversely affect the ensuing year's General Fund budget. As a result, OPI encourages districts to consider the budgeting consequences when deciding whether or not to accrue tuition payments.

### **OBTAINING PAYMENT**

As mentioned above, MAEFAIRS generates the payments for students with state-paid tuition.

DISTRICTS WILL NOT RECEIVE PAYMENT UNTIL THEY ACCESS MAEFAIRS AND INITIATE THE PAYMENT. Districts must follow the following process in order to obtain these payments:

1. Complete an FP-14 Student Attendance Agreement and FP-14A Special Tuition Rate form, if applicable. These forms document the reason for the out-of-district attendance and specify the annual tuition, transportation and special tuition add on rates. The district of attendance should initiate the paperwork process. Note that districts must complete a new form each school year for each student.

2. Submit the forms to OPI immediately upon enrolling an eligible student, and no later than June 30 following the year of attendance. OPI will review the forms for legal compliance and return them to the district of attendance. If approved, OPI will also enter the student's information into MAEFAIRS. Districts cannot change the OPI-entered information. Districts must therefore contact OPI with any changes or corrections to a student's record.

3. Enter each student's days enrolled in MAEFAIRS when MAEFAIRS is released for the ensuing year Budget and TFS reporting. Districts may access MAEFAIRS by following the link below, and entering their log-on information. <https://data.opi.mt.gov/Maefairs/frmLogin.aspx>

- a. Hover over the **Data Entry** heading and select **State Paid Tuition**.
- b. Choose your LE from the drop-down menu.
- c. Select each student's record. Verify each student's information, enter his/her number of days enrolled, and select the **Save** button.
- d. After saving the number of days enrolled for all students, select the **Submit to OPI** button.
- g. Hover over the **Reports** heading, hover over **State Paid Tuition**, and select **State Paid Tuition (FP15)**.
- h. Select the appropriate district(s) and click the **Print to PDF** button. Print a copy of the report for your records.

4. MAEFAIRS will automatically generate a payment for your tuition and transportation amounts. Districts will receive payment with their next regularly scheduled state entitlement payment (see the schedule posted at: <http://www.opi.mt.gov/pdf/schoolfinance/Entitle/FY11StPaySched.pdf>).

5. Deposit the payment to the appropriated funds. OPI sends tuition payments to the General Fund and transportation payments into the Transportation Fund. Under certain circumstances, however, districts may deposit tuition proceeds into the Miscellaneous Programs Fund in accordance with [20-5-324, MCA](#). Contact your county treasurer if you wish to redirect your funds.

You can find additional information--including all forms, a summary of Montana tuition laws, and rate limitations--online at: [http://www.opi.mt.gov/Finance&Grants/schoolfinance/Index.html#gpm1\\_11](http://www.opi.mt.gov/Finance&Grants/schoolfinance/Index.html#gpm1_11) .

Please contact Nicole Thuotte at (406) 444-4524 or [nthuotte@mt.gov](mailto:nthuotte@mt.gov) if you need additional information about tuition or the approval process for state-paid tuition.

Please contact Kathleen Wanner at (406) 444-9852 or [kwanner@mt.gov](mailto:kwanner@mt.gov) if you have any questions about your payment.